

Richard E. D'Aquin
Chair

William T. (Ron) Roberts, Jr.
Vice Chair

Roland M. Toups
Secretary

E. Joseph Savoie
Commissioner of
Higher Education



BOARD OF REGENTS

150 Third Street, Suite 129
Baton Rouge, LA 70801-1389
Phone (225) 342-4253
FAX (225) 342-9318

William "Billy" Blake
Scott O. Brame
Reggie Dupré
Frances T. Henry
Robert W. Levy
William A. Oliver
Virgil Robinson, Jr.
Norbert A. Simmons
William Clifford Smith
Pat A. Strong
Artis L. Terrell, Jr.
Steve Johnson
Student Member

April 8, 2002

Contact: Kim Hunter Reed

TEACHER PREPARATION ACCOUNTABILITY REPORTS ISSUED TODAY

Baton Rouge – The Louisiana Board of Regents for postsecondary education today issued an accountability report grading one factor in an overall assessment of teacher preparation in Louisiana. “The 2001-2002 Institutional Report for the Preparation of Teachers” reviews reform efforts underway in Louisiana’s colleges of education. This year, grades have been assigned for student passage rates on the teacher certification exam (PRAXIS) at public and private colleges and universities.

The Institutional Report is required by the Higher Education Act of 1998. In order to comply with the law, each state must inform the federal government of all low-performing and at-risk colleges of education. According to Commissioner of Higher Education Joseph Savoie, Louisiana is far exceeding the federal requirements by assigning additional labels of performance this year and evaluating several other elements in quality teacher preparation in the coming years.

When asked why Louisiana would self impose standards beyond the federal requirements, Savoie replied, “It’s simple. Louisiana’s challenges require more than just minimum efforts. We are very serious about improving education. We have a responsibility, along with our colleagues and elementary and secondary education, to provide a caring and competent teacher to every child in every classroom every year.”

Today’s report grades the passage rates for graduates in the regular (undergraduate) and alternative certification programs. Grades for public and private colleges and universities include four in the A+ range, nine universities in the A range, two universities in the B range and three universities graded Below C.

(more)

ADD ONE

TEACHER PREPARATION ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

Governor Murphy J. “Mike” Foster recognized the value of this effort. "The most important influence in a child's learning is a well-prepared teacher. With this yearly report, universities will be able to ensure the public that the teachers they produce are prepared to teach our children in the classroom. Quality Teachers produce quality students, and today Louisiana has taken another step to ensure that our students receive the education they deserve and our parents expect, “ Foster said.

"Because we're asking more of our students, it's more important than ever that we have a top notch teaching force," State Superintendent of Education Cecil J. Picard said. "One way to accomplish this goal is through better preparation at the college level. Finally, we are all working to ensure that the most important factor in education - our teachers - are getting the high-quality preparation and support that they need to guide student achievement."

Picard acknowledged higher education officials for their drive to enhance teacher preparation programs in Louisiana universities.

"Thanks to the cooperation from higher education, we now have a true pre-K to 16 system, and we're on our way to lasting improvements in Louisiana classrooms," Picard said.

This year's institutional report contains general information about each college and university, such as school enrollment, notable accomplishments, accreditations, and student characteristics.

Each seven-page report provides overall passage rates of regular and alternative certification students for 1999-2000 and 2000-2001. All grades were based on overall passage rates. In addition, the report provides a detailed breakdown of regular completers on various parts of the PRAXIS exam. Comparable data for alternative certification completers was not available from the Educational Testing Service for today's release, but will be available next month.

Louisiana's current reform efforts were first initiated in 1999 by Louisiana's Blue Ribbon Commission on Teacher Quality. The commission is a joint statewide effort by Governor Foster, the Board of Regents and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, or BESE to improve

(more)

ADD TWO TEACHER PREPARATION ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

the way Louisiana, recruits, prepares and retains teachers throughout the state. This is the second year that the federal government has required states to compile and publish teacher preparation information. For Louisiana, last year (2000-2001) was a baseline year for the reporting of data.

"This report is the result of an unprecedented partnership between the Governor's Office and the state's top education boards. Together, we're bringing accountability to every level of education, demanding the very best education for all Louisiana students," BESE member and Blue Ribbon Commission Co-chair Glenny Lee Buquet said.

"Louisiana is a national leader in education reform efforts. I truly believe that in the years to come, the citizens of our state will see an accountability system that actually reflects the level of preparation provided to our future teachers. Today is an important step in establishing our overall assessment, " said Frances Henry, a member of the Board of Regents and Blue Ribbon Commission co-chair.

Over the next few years, the accountability report will be expanded. Additional factors will be added examining such areas as: efforts to address critical teacher shortage areas (math, science and special education), retention of teachers, and partnerships between universities and local school districts. Surveys will also be conducted allowing first year teachers and their mentors to comment on their level of preparation. The purpose of this accountability system is to keep the public informed about the quality of Louisiana teacher preparation programs.

The institutional reports for Louisiana's colleges of education may be viewed on the Board of Regents' website at www.regents.state.la.us under "What's New at the Board of Regents."

